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## HCQA Kicks Off Referral and Workforce Resource Centers

It's hard not to sing, dance and jump around excitedly as we launch the Referral and Workforce Resource Centers (RWRC) in six counties; Snohomish, Spokane, Whitman, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille. So much work over the past two years has finally begun bearing fruit. The Referral Registry is operational. RWRC staff are notifying and signing up consumer/employers and individual providers. Questions and ideas abound. Planning the day-to-day activities of peer mentoring, employee recognition and professional development has moved into an operational phase. Other states are interested in what we are doing and they are coming out to Washington to learn about the implementation of the Referral Registry.

We encourage you to learn more about the registry and its associated programs, especially if you live or work in any of the six counties where we've launched RWRCs. We'll spend the next few months talking to legislators about how we can implement the RWRC concept across Washington to improve the quality of care and reduce turnover among individual providers on a larger scale.

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### Chair's Corner

By Charles Reed, HCQA Chair

Those of us on the Board of the Home Care Quality Authority are very excited as we roll out the Referral Registry in six counties. Since the very beginning, one of our first priorities has been to develop a Referral Registry of high quality that is available to those needing in-home services. With the start of this new year and the beginning of the Referral & Workforce Resource Centers, we are well on our way toward achieving our first priority. The Home Care Quality Authority has worked long and hard with our staff and interested parties from all over the state to develop an automated Referral Registry system that meets the needs of the consumer/ employer and the providers of service. We want to thank all of those who have been involved in this process for their ideas, suggestions and support.

*(Continued on Page Two)*

## Chair's Corner – continued from Page One

We are very pleased with the product that has been developed and which will now be operational in Snohomish, Spokane, Whitman, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Orielle counties. We are very hopeful that the Referral & Workforce Resource Centers and the automated Referral Registry will be of great assistance to those individuals in need of finding qualified and available providers to meet their desire to live at home with quality services. The Referral Registry will be available 24 hours a day to consumers/employers and case managers to assist them in finding qualified providers of in-home services. The development of the Referral & Workforce Resource Centers and the Referral Registry are truly a major step forward as we all work together to improve the long-term care system in Washington.

## From the Director

By Mindy Schaffner, Executive Director

### Mission, Vision, Action!

The mission and vision statements of the Home Care Quality Authority (HCQA) assert a clear focus on improving the **quality of long-term in-home services** for people with disabilities and aging adults who wish to live independently in their own home. In carrying out this mission, the agency has been actively pursuing various funding mechanisms to make this happen. After obtaining some federal money and developing a Referral Registry database, we are ready to engage in implementing the "Demonstration to Improve the Direct Service Community Workforce Project." This project allows parts of the mission and vision of the agency to be operationalized and evaluated in terms of performance results.

The importance of **local involvement** in carrying out the mission of quality in-home services is a core value for the HCQA. Local agencies that can address quality in-home issues in their communities are very effective. The two agencies that the HCQA has contracted with thus far are **Sunrise Services, Inc** from Everett, Washington and **Aging and Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington** from Spokane Washington. These agencies have been leaders in their communities in long-term care services and have the capacity to carry out measures that improve the **quality and accessibility** of the individual provider workforce.

The mission, vision and actions of the HCQA depend on hearing from people who have an interest in improving in-home long-term care services. Next month, the agency will be creating regulations that relate to the operations of the Referral Registry. If you would like more information on agency activities or rule development, please contact me at [mschaffner@hcqa.wa.gov](mailto:mschaffner@hcqa.wa.gov) or 1-866-580-4272.

## Upcoming Events

### HCQA BOARD MEETINGS

The public is encouraged to attend

#### March 15, 2005

10:30am to 3:30pm  
640 Woodland Square Loop SE  
Room 1-7.1  
Lacey, WA

#### April 19, 2005

10:30am to 3:30pm  
640 Woodland Square Loop SE  
Room 1-7.1  
Lacey, WA

#### May 16, 2005

10:30am to 3:30pm  
640 Woodland Square Loop SE  
Room TBA  
Lacey, WA

### EVENTS

#### Challenges in Caregiving: Giving Care, Taking Care

June 6, 2005  
9am to 4:30pm  
Tukwila Community Center  
MUST PREREGISTER at:  
1-800-422-3263

*The Referral Registry began operation in January, but a lot of behind-the-scenes work is occurring to build the pool of potential providers.*

## Referral Registry Update

By Sherri Wills-Green, Referral Registry Program Manager

Beginning in January, the Referral and Workforce Resource Centers (RWRC) began Referral Registry operations in three service delivery areas, including: Spokane & Whitman, Snohomish, and Ferry, Stevens and Pend Orielle counties.

Registry coordinators are busy contacting potential providers in order to begin building a pool of workers for the registry. The process for qualifying providers includes: background checks, a completed application, face-to-face interviews and attending a three hour introduction to “Becoming a Professional IP.” Once a provider completes this process, they are enrolled and available to be listed on a referral.

Individual providers now have the opportunity to determine which consumer population they want to work for including; persons who are elderly, persons who are over 18 and disabled, adults with developmental disabilities and/or children with developmental disabilities. Individual providers can also indicate if they would like to work on a routine, respite or back-up basis.

The Registry coordinators are also working with Department of Social and Health Services and Area Agency on Aging case management staff to educate and inform them of the value and benefits associated with using the referral registry. Consumers will independently be able to use the system to find a provider or ask a case manager to submit a request for them.

A marketing and recruitment campaign will begin this month as we look forward to populating the registry and begin to provide referrals to consumers and employment opportunities for providers. For more information, you may contact Sherri Wills-Green at 866-580-4272 or 360-725-2520.

## Preparing Staff to Deliver RWRC Services

Last month, approximately fifteen staff from all three Referral and Workforce Resource Center sites converged in Olympia to share best practices and learn about the array of programs they'll soon be delivering to both consumer/employers and individual providers in their areas. For two days, staff practiced using the Referral Registry, discussed issues such as training, marketing and performance measurement, and previewed materials and recommended practices. Future information-sharing will occur by regular conference calls to lend support, discuss concerns and present ideas and accomplishments.



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# Workers Compensation

By Jane Wood, Training and Communications Manager

The other day I met colleagues from another state, who also offer a workers compensation program to in-home individual provider workers. Concerned with higher rates of injury and faced with the resulting pressure of ever-increasing rates to cover the workers, representatives wanted to know why Washington experiences a (much) lower-than-expected workers compensation claim rate. On the outside, we are similar—individual providers do the same work, are organized similarly, and, both recently began offering workers compensation coverage to all individual providers. Looking more closely, there are differences. Individual providers in Washington experience a culture of safety. From the moment hired, taking care of the self and others is emphasized. Mandatory training through the Department of Social and Health Services includes safety components, and new rules by HCQA requiring specially-designed safety training for all individual providers also supports this notion. Outreach to workers through a quarterly safety newsletter continuously educates individual providers about accident and injury prevention. A quarterly safety committee meeting begins next month and will ensure safety issues are kept at the forefront.

The HCQA is charged with, among other things, improving the quality of care and reducing individual provider turnover. Efforts toward improving safety, offering professional development opportunities and working towards reducing turnover are connected and produce significant results. We expect that professional development, peer mentoring and employee recognition will retain workers and improve the quality of care. Time will tell if these efforts pay off. In the meantime, we are continually monitoring, evaluating and refining our proactive safety program for individual providers.

## Joint Training and Education Committee

*As part of the collective bargaining agreement between the state and Service Employees International Union (SEIU), a Joint Training and Education Committee (JTEC) made up of six SEIU members and six HCQA representatives meets monthly to explore training issues.*

Members of the Joint Training and Education Committee met on February 3, 2005 in Olympia to discuss their experiences participating in all three safety training methods: classroom, online and self-study manual. A thorough critique and suggestions for improvement were offered. Ideas to measure participant satisfaction with the training were defined and provided to Sedgwick CMS, the company who delivers the training.

The committee has begun a statewide inventory of continuing education opportunities available to individual providers. The inventory is ongoing, but will serve as a springboard for discussion and future training recommendations.



The next meeting will be held March 3, 2005 in Olympia. Peter Kardas, director of the Labor Education Center at The Evergreen State College will join us to share history of Joint Training and Education Committees.

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